

Mack, G. L. (2004). *The faceless and voiceless parents: How they help their children succeed in school?* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Abstract

Parental involvement is an important component to the academic success of children in schools, based on volumes of studies from as early as the 1960's from Billingsley (1968), Clark (1983), Dauber and Epstein (1989), Jackson (1988), Comer and Poussaint (1992) to the most current research from Epstein (1995), Catsambis (1998), Yan (1999), and Mack (2003). We know that African American parents want their children to succeed in school and that African American parents' that are involved, have expressed areas of concern to improve parental involvement, Mack (2003), Thompson (2003), Chevalier (2003), Lawson (2003) . The purposes of this study were to recognize the "faceless/voiceless" African American parent, those parents perceived as not visible or vocal in our urban schools, investigate how these parents help their children to succeed in school, and give voice to their perceptions of how the school meets the educational needs of their children. A qualitative study was the dominant strategy to gather data from the participants. These participants were recommended by school personnel as not involved or vocal in the school. Each participant completed a brief demographic form and responded to four in-depth interview questions: (1) What are your goals for your children? (2) How do you help your children succeed academically in school? (3) How does the school help in the success of your children? (4) How does the school address your needs and concerns? The attendance records, discipline records, teacher journals, and the student's cumulative folders were also reviewed for information relevant to the research. The data indicated not only were parents involved at home as well as school, but school administration, teachers and staff needed to be more accessible to these parents and be more attentive to parent's concerns. The findings from this study may be utilized to develop programs in the local schools that will increase parental involvement, build parent and school relationships, and improve the academic performance of African American children in urban schools. This study may have implications for college teacher education programs, urban school administrators, teachers, support staff, district, state, and federal policy makers.